



CRA Board Workshop Meeting Minutes
Thursday, April 27, 2021 – 2:00 p.m.
Commission Chambers
Delray Beach City Hall
Delray Beach, FL 33444

STAFF PRESENT:

Renee Jadusingh	Christine Tibbs	Kim Phan
Rob Massi	Nikki Temple	Tracy Waterlander

OTHERS PRESENT:

Ferline Mesidort	Evelyn Dobson
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1. Call to Order

Chair Johnson called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present: Chair Shirley Ervin Johnson, Vice Chair Adam Frankel (virtual), Deputy Vice Chair Angie Gray, Commissioner Ryan Boylston, Commissioner Shelly Petrolia, Commissioner Juli Casale, and Commissioner Kelcey Cordell Brooks.

Absent: Commissioner Kelcey Cordell Brooks.

3. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Petrolia, seconded by Commissioner Boylston, to approve the agenda as presented. In a roll call vote, the **motion** passed (6-0).

4. Discussion

a. Delray Beach Green Market Location

Executive Director Renee Jadusingh explained the time for the Green Market was approaching, and it was usually held in the Tennis Center, but the Tennis Center does not allow for

appropriate social distancing. She stated staff were recommending the market be held at Old School Square and noted the event would be on the front lawn due to resodding.

Commissioner Casale stated that she liked it at Old School Square. She added that sometimes it is difficult to park in the Tennis Center.

Commissioner Boylston asked for clarification regarding the event plans and COVID-19 accommodations. He noted that the shade on the front lawn was a positive.

Ms. Jadusingh responded that the decisions were being made on a case-by-case basis.

Commissioner Petrolia asked if there would be issues with sod at the location.

Ms. Jadusingh stated that she had spoken with staff, and if the location was used for the Green Market, the area would be resodded after the event was complete.

Commissioner Petrolia asked why the previous market location at Old School Square was not being considered.

Ms. Jadusingh responded that staff had thought it best to leave that area open since it had new grass, but the item was up for discussion. She added that the shade in that area had been popular.

Chair Johnson stated that she thought moving the event away from Old School Square opened the Green Market to other residents. She noted that a lot of people do not go east of Swinton, and anything that could be held west of Swinton was a plus. She added that she thought this was the opportune to do something. She stated that she had wanted to have it on the 700 block, but that had not worked out.

Ms. Jadusingh stated that staff had looked at options west of Swinton, but had run into issues, including lack of ADA compliance and trash collection. She explained restrictions under the contract with Waste Management for removing debris.

Chair Johnson suggested that perhaps when the Hatcher Realty building was complete, the Green Market could be held on his site, allowing it to be part-time uptown and part-time downtown.

Ms. Jadusingh stated staff had been speaking with the Arts Garage about having an event in the west, noting that a one (1) time event was different than weekly due to logistics to work out.

Chair Johnson asked how many vendors the market loses over the summer.

Ms. Jadusingh stated the total number of vendors was less during summer, but a lot of people had expressed interest in continuing due to business impacts of COVID-19.

Commissioner Petrolia reiterated what Commissioner Boylston had said about the benefit of the shade on the front lawn of Old School Square but noted that she was not sure she would

be comfortable with the market being in that location forever. She stated she was in support of the location for the current season due to COVID-19.

Ms. Jadusingh outlined how the location was being utilized to allow social distancing.

Deputy Vice Chair Gray stated that she thought the location was great for the vendors and visibility to show that Delray Beach is open again. She commented on the sod discussion and asked who would be funding the replacement.

Ms. Jadusingh responded that it would be the Parks and Recreation Department. She commented on the rotating booths which had been introduced to the market during the current season and noted that the change had been welcome.

Chair Johnson stated she would be interested in additional thoughts and ideas for a permanent market for the Green Market. She asserted the market was a great event and it was sad that they were continuously moved from spot to spot.

b. Presentation – Neighborhood & Community Services – Curb Appeal Program Update and Other City Housing Rehabilitation Programs

Ferline F. Mesidort, Neighborhood and Community Services Administrator for the City of Delray Beach, shared information regarding programs.

Ms. Mesidort provided an outline of the Curb Appeal program, noting it started in 2007 with the primary purpose of improving aesthetics in order to increase home values and benefit neighborhoods. She shared items the program could address, including:

- Exterior painting
- Replacement of missing or rotten siding associated with exterior painting
- Pressure cleaning related to exterior painting
- Landscaping and irrigation for areas visible from the street
- Permanent driveway repairs
- Mailbox replacement
- Replacement of house numbers
- Roof repair or replacement
- Ramp/railings for ADA accessibility
- Fence replacement (existing only)

Ms. Mesidort discussed the income eligibility and process for the program. She stated there was an approved contractor list for the City and explained how contractors can get onto the approved list. She stated that after document signing, it typically takes 45-60 days to complete a project. She shared photos of completed projects.

Continuing, Ms. Mesidort discussed the addition of roof repairs to the program, explaining an issue which was identified wherein residents were not able to get insurance without making roof repairs or replacement. She stated three (3) residents had been assisted with this issue.

Ms. Mesidort shared the accomplishments of the project, noting there were 48 projects completed, two (2) currently in review, and 10 in the write-up and landscape design phase. She explained the total expended to date was \$214,379.45 and the average cost per project was \$4,985.57. Ms. Mesidort noted that the program maximums had been amended in recent years, so averages would be impacted.

Ms. Mesidort reviewed additional funding sources available through City housing rehabilitation programs. She stated the owner-occupied rehabilitation program could expend up to \$60,000 to address interior and exterior Code violations with the structure of a home as long as the family occupying the home was income eligible. She explained the funds were secured by promissory note against the title of the property.

Continuing, Ms. Mesidort discussed the purchase assistance program first-time homeowners available through the City. She stated a first-time buyer was defined as someone who had not owned a home in the past three (3) years. She explained the funds were also secured by promissory note against the title of the property until the expiration of the lien.

Ms. Mesidort reviewed rental assistance and security deposit assistance programs available. She noted the funds were considered a grant. She discussed the Public Service programs available through the City, made up mostly of youth care programs, including childcare, summer camp, and legal aid. Ms. Mesidort outlined the additional funds made available over the past year through the Community Development Block Grant Coronavirus (CDBG-CV) program for business and individual rental assistance.

Ms. Mesidort discussed the overall strength of the programs, including the potential impacts of the legislative session, and asked for any questions from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Petrolia asked if there were limitations on repeated requests by the same individuals.

Ms. Mesidort stated the programs had a revisit clause within the agreements of five (5) or 15 years depending on the program.

Deputy Vice Chair Gray asserted the programs were one (1) of the best kept secrets in the City. She asked how they were advertising and how the Commissioners could help more with getting the word out.

Ms. Mesidort stated the marketing efforts were primarily to share the information via the Homeowners Associations, Neighborhood Block Captains, the City's website, social media, and attending meetings. She added that additional marketing was being discussed and stated that the Department heavily relies on the outreach of the Code Enforcement Officers.

Deputy Vice Chair Gray noted that the way in which staff had stepped up in relation to the roofing issue identified was huge. She stated that if the legislative session resulted in a reduction in funding, she thought the CRA Board should look at funding of the program,

because the help was something the communities had been complaining about for a very long time.

Deputy Vice Chair Gray stated that across the world housing was a huge issue, and while Delray Beach was doing more than most cities, the CRA needed to truly make sure that the community was being serviced. She asked that the issue be kept in mind and stated the issue should have been tackled years ago. She thanked Ms. Mesidort for her work.

Commissioner Boylston stated one (1) of the topics that came at the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee meeting was that because the City does have limited dollars, the CRA has to use as much CRA funds as possible so that City dollars could be spread out over the rest of the City where needed.

Commissioner Petrolia added that she wanted to piggyback on Deputy Vice Chair Gray's comment. She stated the CRA does a good job of trying to meet the needs of the community, but maybe not as good a job of showing how that is being done. She noted that during recent campaigning, there was pretty strong pushback that the CRA has done nothing for the community. She stated it was amazing what the CRA had accomplished in the past three (3) years since the CRA Board was taken over by the Commission, and there needs to be more celebrating that.

Commissioner Petrolia asked that a list be added to the website so the Commissioners could show the people helped and the support for the business community, help for needy areas, and other projects. She stated it makes it difficult when there is not an easy resource at their fingertips.

Chair Johnson noted that they would want to be sensitive to the identities of the residents supported through programs.

Commissioner Petrolia agreed, and added that they did not need names or addresses, just maybe a street name to be able to say.

Chair Johnson stated she had questions about the landscaping program. She noted she would love to have someone explain further, because sometimes in trying to help, new issues are created. She stated devices were being put on residents' irrigation systems which require annual inspection, which puts the burden on the homeowner to get an annual plumber to certify the backflow is working, and residents were not being informed ahead of time. She asserted that if they were informed, most would say they did not want it. She referenced an example of an elderly low-income household that had reached out to her.

Chair Johnson asserted that the City and CRA needed to be vigilant to ensure that they were actually helping when trying to help, and that what they were doing was working. She stated the lack of a follow-up program after two (2) or five (5) years would be her one (1) complaint. She commented on the trees used in one (1) of the example photos and stated they gave no shade or beauty.

Ms. Meidort stated that since her last conversation with Chair Johnson regarding the backflow preventer, fail safes had been put in place to make sure that residents know that their project would require the backflow preventer. She stated the backflow preventer requirement was an Ordinance by the City Commission.

Chair Johnson stated she was happy Ms. Mesidort and her department had worked to do something to stop the catch-22 that kept people in need of roof repair from being eligible for homeowners' insurance. She added that she was especially thankful the City was giving funds for purchase assistance. She commented on getting the message out.

Deputy Vice Chair Gray asked Ms. Mesidort about the Sadowski Fund and why those dollars were not being utilized.

Ms. Mesidort stated the Sadowski Fund and State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) were one (1) in the same. She noted those were the funds that were expected to be reduced by the State Legislature.

Deputy Vice Chair Gray asked if those funds had been being utilized, or if they had been allowed to sit in the past.

Ms. Mesidort explained that the SHIP funds were historically the first to be swept, so whenever there was an issue with the State General Fund, the legislature had been drafting it out of those funds. She stated the owner-occupied rehabilitation and purchase assistance strategies came out of that fund and based on the amount received only one (1) or two (2) homeowners per year could be assisted. She explained the money had been being used, but at times compliance measures restricted the funds to the very low-income or low-income categories and applications had to be put on hold as a result.

Deputy Vice Chair Gray asked what was needed from the CRA, noting the funds were likely to be reduced further.

Ms. Mesidort stated the programs are reviewed on an annual basis, and applications which had to be denied are documented. She asserted that hopefully those needs would be addressed through the strategies available to the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee. She noted that staff is currently looking at ways to improve the landscape program, to make the application process smoother, and marketing. Ms. Mesidort added that in the future, potential remedies identified would be shared with CRA staff.

Deputy Vice Chair Gray commented that in the past, the City had a communications person, and that rehiring that position could help. She stated the Police Department had public relations people, but the City and CRA were missing that piece in order to shape the message that was put out.

Chair Johnson stated she appreciated the comments about sharing the stories of what was being done and thought it was something the CRA needed to work on. She added that the CRA had not been as close to organizations in the community as they could have been, and brochures did not tout accomplishments.

Chair Johnson thanked Ms. Mesidort for pointing out the issue with the Sadowski funds being swept.

Commissioner Petrolia stated she is on the Housing Leadership Coalition, and they lobby every single year to keep the Sadowski Funds from being swept, and inevitably it still happens. She noted the legislators are just used to going to that place first, and until there is a change in leadership that understands the importance of the housing crisis on a local level, it will not change.

Chair Johnson stated there used to be a Parks and Recreation program that took senior citizens to Tallahassee, and if they were still doing it, perhaps the seniors should be asked to lobby against raiding the housing. She added that if it didn't affect them, it was their children or grandchildren.

Deputy Vice Chair Gray asked Chair Johnson her thoughts on the City and CRA hiring a public relations person.

Chair Johnson stated it was something that they could ask Ms. Jadusingh to look into.

Commissioner Boylston added that it was a good discussion to have while setting the budget. He noted he had been saying at the City Commission level that more communication was needed. He referenced his time on the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and stated the smartest thing they ever did was create a line item for public relations. He stated you have got to tell your story, and that costs money.

Commissioner Boylston stated that he believed by investing a fraction of the budget in public relations, you definitely get it back. He added that he would be very much in favor of having that discussion.

Ms. Jadusingh provided feedback on the Board comments. She stated that when the CRA Board switched to the City Commission the funding for the Curb Appeal program was at \$75,000, and last year it had been increased to \$150,000. She stated that she believed they were on track to need additional funding before the end of the year. She explained that she had let Ms. Mesidort and her team know that the CRA had funds set aside for affordable housing initiatives and would be happy to bring a request to shift additional dollars into the program before the Board.

Ms. Jadusingh noted the CRA does have a contract with Atlantic Current to do marketing and communications. She shared the stories page on the CRA website, where stories of projects and staff are published. She added that the information was also being mailed, mainly to the Northwest/Southwest Neighborhood, but that could be increased to the entire district. She stated after listening to the Board speak, maybe something special about public relations related to housing could be targeted. She added that there were available funds within the budget.

Commissioner Petrolia stated that she sees much more of the DDA than she does the CRA and asserted that they were obviously missing a mark. She said she was not sure what it was but thought the CRA needed to step it up.

Ms. Jadusingh responded that the CRA doesn't do any paid advertising at all but could look to increase the scope and add additional.

Deputy Vice Chair Gray asserted that not everyone is on social media, and people keep forgetting that. She stated the personal touch was also important and noted the Police Department has a public relations person who is out there in the community.

Chair Johnson stated she thought it would be nice, since the majority of CRA funds were being spent in the Northwest/Southwest Neighborhood, if there was a spot or space that would blast out the fact that the CRA is here in the community. She commented on the CRA locations and stated there was not a spot in the Northwest/Southwest. She stated the CRA needed to toot their own horn and suggested a monthly CRA day.

Ms. Jadusingh noted that the newsletter also goes out to the churches, businesses, and community groups in the Northwest/Southwest, in addition to an email distribution list they are included on. She stated staff could work more on visibility marketing.

c. Update from the Delray Beach Community Land Trust and Other Housing Options

Chair Johnson stated she was hoping the update was the reverse of the title, as the Board knows more about the Delray Beach Community Land Trust (CLT) than other housing options. She added that the terms get thrown around, and there needed to be a better understanding.

Evelyn Dobson, CLT CEO, provided a brief overview of the CLT's affordable housing program services. She explained the program focuses on benefitting the community by bringing access to quality affordable housing options.

Ms. Dobson explained the CLT was birthed by the CRA in January 2006. She reviewed activity of the group since that time, including total sales of 108 homes, past and future development, and property management. She stated the CLT manages four projects, with 37 units owned by the CRA and six (6) units owned by the CLT.

Continuing, Ms. Dobson reviewed affordable housing income limits, noting it was the same information shared by Ms. Mesidort in the previous discussion. She broke down Delray Beach data regarding owner-occupied and rental housing units and stated a County report found there were substantial gaps for affordable housing for low- and moderate-income households.

Ms. Dobson explained the donation of surplus properties is a key component in the CLT's efforts to stabilize neighborhoods and assist individuals with a desire to purchase homes. She discussed offsite development within the Workforce Housing program and showed examples of homes sold through the program.

Ms. Dobson reviewed the partnership with the CRA for Workforce Housing at Corey Jones Isle, stating that funds for construction were approved by the CRA Board, and would be

paid back with the sale of each home. She noted that all 10 homes are currently committed and in process. She stated the first three (3) homes were hoping to close by the end of May.

Continuing, Ms. Dobson explained the infill/scattered site strategy, used to motivate existing homeowners to upgrade their properties while also providing housing for applicants. She shared images of several projects and commented on improvements to safety, as well as to the slum and blight in project neighborhoods.

Ms. Dobson reviewed the apartments, duplexes, and single-family homes rented by the CLT. She discussed individuals and families impacted by the program and shared quotes from some of those people. She stated the CLT Board had decided to add deed-restricted homes to their offerings and were preparing to test the first property.

Ms. Dobson discussed options available to developers and the need for homes for families with a desire to live in Delray Beach. She stated the program has a waiting list, and recently had to put a hold on accepting homebuyer applications due to a lack of land to accommodate those already on the list. She reviewed current home prices. Ms. Dobson discussed accommodating the approach to supporting growing families and the CLT's approach to equity.

Chair Johnson stated since joining the Board she had come to appreciate the great pent-up demand for housing, including families with children that have nowhere to go because they can not afford it. She noted that because of all the things that have happened since she has been in public office, a number of external things have put pressures on the housing market. She discussed examples of homes she considered to be overpriced in the community because everyone wants to live in Delray Beach.

Ms. Dobson responded briefly (off microphone) regarding development projects and required incomes to live comfortably in the community.

Commissioner Petrolia asked for clarification regarding the Corey Jones Isle project, stating it had been her understanding that the CRA filled the gap between what was being built and the purchase price.

Ms. Jadusingh explained there were two (2) pots of money utilized for the project. She stated the CRA has a loan with the CLT which will be repaid, and separately there is purchase assistance with the purchasers.

Commissioner Petrolia asserted that was very confusing and asked for further clarification regarding what the CRA would come out of pocket for when selling a home for \$150,000 in the Corey Jones Isle project that cost \$300,000 to build.

Ms. Dobson responded that the CRA would not be out of pocket for construction costs, only purchase assistance costs.

Ms. Jadusingh added that the loan to the CLT was \$2.4 million and would be reimbursed.

Commissioner Petrolia asked where the CLT gets the money to pay the CRA loan back.

Ms. Dobson stated the funds would be repaid from the sale of the homes.

Commissioner Petrolia asked how the gap between the cost to build, and the sales price was made up.

Ms. Jadusingh explained the funding sources to satisfy the loan at the sale of the home.

Commissioner Petrolia outlined the process followed by developers to build Workforce Housing, and stated it was her understanding that the CRA was taking the place of the developer on the project in subsidizing the sale price.

Ms. Jadusingh explained that the CRA was offering up to \$85,000 in purchase assistance for each home. She noted that on the project with Pulte Homes, there was no purchase assistance offered through the CRA.

Ms. Dobson added that Pulte Homes had received in-lieu dollars from the County Workforce Housing program.

Commissioner Petrolia asserted it was great to have Delray Beach be the recipient of those dollars, rather than have it go somewhere else. She stated this was one (1) of the reasons she was supportive of the partnership, because it gave the CRA additional dollars to invest in raw land or build affordable housing.

Continuing, Commissioner Petrolia stated that she applauds the CLT for looking at the deed restrictions of 40 years versus 99 years and noted that there is a part of her that sees the need for the different restrictions because what the City does not want is to build affordable housing and then lose it right away.

Commissioner Petrolia stated that people will argue that they are keeping owners from building wealth but allowing people to buy a three (3) bedroom, two (2) bathroom home for \$160,000 was already building wealth. She noted that the homes still appreciate, even if they do not own the land, and that puts the owner in a better position than when they did not even own. She added that there are different products for different people at different times, and they need to do the best they can to build inventory to meet that variety of needs.

Commissioner Casale thanked Ms. Dobson for the thorough presentation. She stated it was very rewarding to see the man who was a lifelong renter walk through the door of his own home. She asked how many prequalified people were on the CLT wait list.

Ms. Dobson responded that outside of the Corey Isles homebuyer applicants, there were more than 20 prequalified and preapproved for a mortgage. She noted the CLT only has 13 lots to build on for those applicants.

Commissioner Casale asked the price point on the pilot single family home that is deed restricted through the CLT.

Ms. Dobson stated she was not sure due to changing construction costs. She noted that the CLT Board had discussed reducing the price of the land to keep the home affordable.

Deputy Vice Chair Gray asked for additional clarification regarding paying back the loan to the CRA. She referenced the current market prices in the community and stated the CRA Board was supportive of addressing the housing issues.

Deputy Vice Chair Gray stated that Ms. Dobson and the City had exercised foresight in starting the CLT, but the City had supported it less than it could have over time. She noted that in the past few years since development had increased, the CLT had more competition for lots. She asserted that the CLT homes are beautiful and argued that those who are poor in the community deserve nice things. She commented on the homes being in the Northwest/Southwest Neighborhoods.

Ms. Dobson explained which neighborhoods the CLT homes are in, including different areas of the community. She stated that predominantly, the concentration of homes is in the CRA district.

Deputy Vice Chair Gray stated she was thinking about the repayment on the loan. She asserted the CRA gives \$1 million to the Tennis Center, transportation, \$2 million to art projects, and do not ask those funds be paid back. She asserted that affordable housing was so important, and she does not get why the CLT is being asked to pay the funds back. She asked that the Board revisit the issue.

Deputy Vice Chair Gray stated the CLT has to be stable in order to address the needs in the community. She asked how it would hurt the CRA if they forgave the loan.

Chair Johnson asserted that she also did not understand. She stated she needed to spend some time understanding the terms for low-income and Workforce Housing and asserted that the CRA had a lot of work to do to meet the community's needs. She stated that the City would miss out on an opportunity to retain the essence of Delray Beach if they succumbed to the pressure of increased people wanting to move somewhere warm and sunny.

Chair Johnson asked for clarification regarding the land transfer for the Carver Square project with Pulte Homes.

Ms. Jadusingh stated the item was on the regular agenda and called for Pulte Homes to purchase the land.

Chair Johnson stated that she hoped supporting the CLT would be a topic of discussion moving forward, including revisiting the loan. She asserted it did not seem quite fair what the CLT was being asked to do.

Chair Johnson asked for clarification regarding the issues with closing on the first (3) homes at Corey Jones Isle and asked if there was something the CRA could do to help.

Ms. Dobson stated that the CLT was working through an issue the lender had with the lien document with the CRA attorney.

Ms. Jadusingh explained the attorney was working on it, and it would come back before the CRA Board if an amendment was necessary.

Ms. Jadusingh stated the CLT was funded through property management and through the A-GUIDE. She noted that this gave the CRA two (2) mechanisms to support the CLT, and stated that there had been discussion regarding housing as a standalone program rather than in the A-GUIDE. She noted that these issues could be discussed in a workshop prior to the budget hearings. She asked for direction regarding addition of forgiving the loan as an agenda item.

Commissioner Boylston stated he would love to have a discussion and hear staff recommendations, as well as repercussions and models from other projects. He noted it was a fairly big discussion and set a precedent.

Continuing, Commissioner Boylston asserted that he would love to have a dedicated workshop just to discuss affordable housing and how the CRA could get more aggressive. He stated that the CRA is doing everything they say they are doing but wants to do more. He thanked Ms. Dobson for the constant updates and stated it was clear the CLT was paying attention to the community.

Commissioner Boylston reminded the Board that there was still the former Pomosa site, where 50 affordable houses could go. He stated when he brought it up before he said it would be a shame for it to sit there as a condemned school, but it would be even more of a shame if the School District decided they were open to selling it on the open market and \$1.2 million homes are built on it instead of an affordable homes project.

Commissioner Casale stated that she was in agreement with Commissioner Boylston on the Pomosa site issue, but her concern was in the price per lot once the land was broken down. She asserted the conversation should be about whether the CRA could get the land for a lower price if they created reasonable Workforce Housing, not just for a select group. She noted Pulte Homes had discussed doing a project for teachers.

Chair Johnson stated that she thought they all would be interested in discussing that.

Commissioner Boylston responded that he thought they could negotiate a fraction of the appraised value. He noted that the calculation discussed was at appraised value.

Chair Johnson stated that she thought the Board could spend four (4) hours discussing housing and the community's needs.

d. CRA Project Updates

Ms. Jadusingh stated that the updates were available online and the Commissioners could let staff know if they had questions.

5. Other Business

a. Comments by Executive Director

Item not addressed.

b. Comments by Board Attorney

Item not addressed.

c. Comments by Commissioners

Item not addressed.

6. Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 4:01 p.m.

Renee Jadusingh, Executive Director

Shirley Ervin Johnson, Board Chair